

Exposure of Air Force Veterans to Agent Orange in Vietnam

Health problem

- Air Force personnel in “Operation Ranch Hand” aerially sprayed Agent Orange, which was contaminated with dioxin, in Vietnam.
- Scientists had estimated the amount of exposure of these veterans, but there was no way to verify these estimates, since no method existed to measure dioxin in blood.

Lab response

- The lab developed a method to measure dioxin in blood—the first lab in the world to have this capacity.
- Blood dioxin levels of a sample of Ranch Hand veterans showed that the previous estimates did not accurately reflect dioxin exposure.
- Therefore, the lab measured blood dioxin levels in all 1200 Ranch Hand veterans and a control group of about 600 veterans.

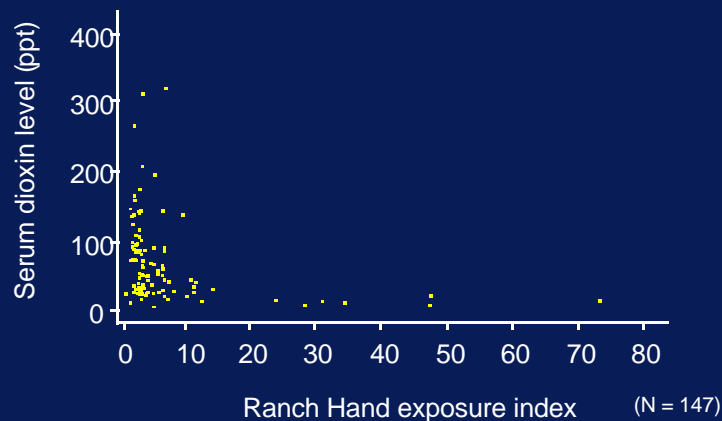
Health impact

- Without the blood dioxin measurement, the Air Force health study would have been scientifically invalid—wasting more than \$140 million.
- The Air Force can now validly relate dioxin exposure to disease and properly care for Air Force Ranch Hand veterans.



Air Force spraying
Agent Orange in Vietnam

The Ranch Hand dioxin exposure index was not correlated with serum dioxin levels



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